

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Rowe Calls for Special Session to Protect Property Rights



State Rep. T. R. Rowe, R-123rd, Trumbull, today called for a special legislative session this summer to limit the state's eminent domain laws that have been used to seize private property and turn it over to developers who then profit from economic development projects.

Rep. Rowe said, "Every American citizen deserves the right claim their part of the 'American Dream.' Unfortunately, the Court's ruling puts that in jeopardy. This is not hyperbole; people have been and continue to be being displaced from their very homes by the state. Eminent domain has its place, but abuses such as those we've seen need to be curtailed."

House Republican Leader Robert M. Ward of North Branford has spearheaded the drive to protect property owners' rights in the wake of the highly controversial U.S. Supreme Court decision involving the city of New London and residents of the Fort Trumbull area who challenged the use of eminent domain.

By a 5-4 margin, the high court ruled the state's eminent domain laws were constitutional but invited Connecticut to limit them if it wanted.

House Republicans have co-sponsored legislation that they want to introduce in a special session either later this month or in early August when the legislature is mandated to return to the Capitol to take up matters that were vetoed by Gov. M. Jodi Rell during the regular session. Rep. Rowe has signed on as a sponsor of the proposed bill.

"This is not a complicated matter as opponents have suggested," said state Rep. Rowe. "You either stand with the individual homeowners who don't want to sell their homes and be forced to move, or you stand on the side of big government and powerful developers."

His proposal deletes from existing state law six lines that currently permit development agencies to seize property for economic development. Local and state governments could still exercise eminent domain to deal with truly blighted properties that pose health or safety hazards or for public works projects including schools, roads and other infrastructure improvements.

Rep. Rowe serves the 123rd Assembly District of Trumbull.